

Stormwater Program Review

Focus Group Notes

Name: Don Jakes (presenter); Roger Karn (facilitator); Dave Richfield, Mary Lynn (themes); Darryl Weakley (note taker)

Date: 10/09/07

Time: 9:00 – 11:00

Location: MPCA, St. Paul

Attendees: Consultants

- Ron Leaf SEH
- Len Kremer Barr Eng.
- Walter Eshenaur SRF
- Roger Clay Earth Tech
- Lorin Hatch HDR
- Wes Saunders-Pearce Houston Eng.
- Pete Willenbring WSB & Assoc
- Greg Halverson Bonestroo
- Joel Schilling Schilling Services LLC
- Bill Douglas Bolton & Menk
- Aaron Mlynek Westwood Prof. Serv.

*Note taker: Please write down common themes that you hear. We don't want you to transcribe the conversation.

1. React to this vision statement about stormwater management. It is apparent from the statement it will take all of our efforts to accomplish.
 - Little bit "ivory tower" to much to take on given where we are at.
 - In contrast with existing frame works, agricultural issues. MS4 issues,
 - Very ambitious given the framework that is in place, ditch laws
 - Conflict with the nondeg laws.
 - Disconnect with current permits and regulations
 - Pie in the sky all encompassing, not realistic
 - The words "all" and "high quality" need to be defined
 - Ditch law is a big player here.
 - Conflict ,currently with reasonable volume and quality
 - Reasonable volume not definable, vision statements pie in the sky.
 - Look long term about sending water downstream
 - Vision statement would get different reaction depending on audience. High quality/reasonable volume would get different reaction
 - High quality has different meaning depending on where discharged, standards may vary
 - Many components of stormwater that are inherent from other than land flow.
 - The words "will be" pretty aggressive commitment
 - Doesn't focus on any specific resource i.e how using lakes rivers and streams

- Instead of saying all should be more specific
2. As you consider stormwater management in Minnesota, what is going well that you wouldn't want to change/lose?
 - Current MS4 permit, burden placed on discharger, concerned it will end up with better water quality
 - watershed approach has worked well. Watersheds have worked with cities to accomplish better WQ. Citizens willing to pay more for better stormwater quality
 - people who care are influencing others
 - communication with public is good
 - university has helped with their programs
 - funding is on the right track
 - permitting is on the right track
 - flexibility of BMPs
 - education has improved, making people much more aware of their responsibility
 - LUGs are pushing things down to the citizen level
 - Industrial permit moving forward without emphasizing monitoring, not so much risk of being "hung" by numbers
 - SSC and other similar groups have helped
 - Nondeg plans , standards for new development have been working
 - Permitting programs have been working
 - Stormwater manual
 - Flexibility
 3. What currently is not working the way you would like or what issues/opportunities do you see?
 - Nondeg plan in community with Ag areas would be a problem due to nutrient levels. Need to improve ag runoff.
 - Highlighting things that have been done in the past that they are working, rather than focusing on enf.
 - Variation on how rules are interpreted on a given site, and enf. Action is being taken
 - Improve relation between TMDL and stormwater programs , talk about this in the vision statement
 - Timing of tying TMDL program with other programs
 - Multiple agency's managing the same resource, need a single lead at the state level
 - Mn river watershed too big to deal with from one point
 - State issuance of watershed based permits would be very difficult, biggest concern on enforcement, never have enough staff
 - Current mode of enforcement for 402 will not work in the future
 - Overlapping jurisdictions , process for defining stormwater operations broken
 - Need to come up with a standard and apply it statewide
 - Wasting money on BMPs that are not working, need to do better with application of resources
 - Per acre design standards with TMDL would work better

- Knowledge gap between permitting on MS4 and construction permitting
 - Need more education in the community
 - Cities not on a level playing field
 - Enforcement on construction sites varied
 - Stormwater mgmt and wetlands not working at state level
4. What didn't we ask you that you want to tell us? (What one thing to leave us with?)
- Education has been more effective than enforcement in WQ treatment
 - burden should be on the discharger, will never have enough cops
 - MNDOT excludes some of the cities they pass through in the MS4 program
 - Frustration with legislature and regulatory community
 - No shortage of funding, plenty to do what we need to do
 - Over analysis of operations
 - TMDL program does not have enough resources. Need to decide on what issues to go after and do it at the same time rather than piecemeal
 - Better use of resources.